

STATEMENT REGARDING

**The National Cancer Legislation Advisory Committee Report
Conquering Cancer: A National Battle Plan to Eradicate Cancer in Our Lifetime**

**Presented to the
United States Senate
Cancer Coalition**

**The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Sam Brownback
Co-chairs**

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October 10, 2001

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“Fulfilling our Promise”

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today both as a member of the National Cancer Legislation Advisory Committee and on behalf of the Intercultural Cancer Council (ICC).

While we now stand on the threshold of unparalleled progress that will ultimately relieve the burden of cancer, we find ourselves at a point of asking if there are additional steps that might further strengthen our national strategies and programs. For example, can mechanisms be put in place that effectively translate our research in the laboratory to the bedside and deliver it to the community? Can disparities that exist whether due to economics, cultural differences, genetics, or omission be removed? Could rigorous yearly strategic planning and multi-level oversight guarantee that what we learn is effectively delivered through our governmental and private healthcare services? The answer is – yes. However, it is evident that steps must also take place at the community level where individuals suffer from this disease.

We have made a promise to the American people. Now it is time to fulfill that promise. We must provide a means for ensuring that our return on investment is realized among all Americans in all of America’s communities. Financial commitment is imperative but our financial investment must be complemented with a process of managing the application, access, delivery and utilization of what we learn.

The ICC is a national multidisciplinary and multicultural nonprofit education and advocacy organization. The ICC’s mission is to promote policies, programs, partnerships, and research to eliminate the unequal burden of cancer among racial and ethnic minorities and medically underserved populations in the United States and its associated territories. Our motto, “Speaking With One Voice”, signifies the joint and common desire of our Governing Board, Advisors and Collaborators, and our 10,000-member strong ICC National Network to eliminate cancer and other health disparities for all Americans.

Madame Chairman, the ICC commends your leadership in initiating the work of the National Cancer Legislation Advisory Committee. Speaking on behalf of the Intercultural Cancer Council I would like to offer the following initial recommendations as you consider the content of this report.

- The ICC believes the country needs a comprehensive national cancer plan encompassing and coordinating the plans of and for individual agencies and organizations, and one covering not only research but the delivery of optimal cancer care (preventive services through rehabilitation) to all segments of the population.
- The ICC believes it is imperative to:
 - Reduce cancer disparities in underserved populations including low socioeconomic groups, both minority and non-minority.
 - Recognize and deal with concerns about the availability, accessibility and utilization of cancer care services in underserved populations in addition to concerns about cost and lack of health insurance.

- Recognize that in order to assure the provision of high quality cancer care, a process will be needed through which acceptable patient care guidelines can be developed and adherence to them monitored.
- Ensure that cultural and language issues are not a barrier to participation in neither research nor the utilization of knowledge gained from it once applied.
- The ICC urges that diverse elements in our society, including minorities and the medically underserved, be represented on all bodies responsible for planning, implementing and evaluation programs covering the entire cancer continuum.
- The ICC urges that community representatives, including those from minority and medically underserved communities, be participants in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all cancer control initiatives.
- In order to conduct its cancer control programs in the most effective way CDC, HRSA and IHS should have the authority to fund directly activities conducted by public, private or non-profit entities operating individually or in partnership.
- The external advisory committee for the CDC National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program should be expanded to encompass other cancer control activities of CDC.
- NCI should support high quality clinical trials conducted by private oncology groups.
- The ICC urges that mammography facilities collecting data under the MQSA Guidelines report this information in an appropriate form so that a population-based report on screening mammography outcomes can be prepared annually.
- The ICC urges the Congress to designate an entity to be responsible, and accountable, for the development, implementation and evaluation of the national cancer program, including the prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

In summary, what we have learned is that great advances have been made through our investment in cancer research. We must increase our investment in research and accelerate our progress and complete the task. At the same time we must ensure that the fruits of these efforts are made available to all Americans. We have found many federal, private and non-profit sector examples of individual successes in what has been described as the War on Cancer since the original Act of 1971. We have also seen that working together the War can be won. Individual agencies and entities alone can win battles but together they can win the War. Now in this new millennium we have passed through "Cancer at the Crossroads" to being able to write a chapter on the "History of Cancer, A Disease Whose Day has Passed" by not only producing knowledge but by putting knowledge to use.

Therefore, it is imperative that coordination and management of the overall cancer research enterprise be linked to effective delivery of the products of discovery and assurances of access by All Americans in a timely and equitable fashion.